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1. Between September 1944 and 1947, it was relatively easy for the Bulgarian Communist government to find recruits for the so-called "Volunteer Brigades", particularly among the youth and the others who believed the Communist propaganda. At first, this propaganda took the line that such labor organizations were necessary for the development of industry and the railways, so that all Bulgarian villages would have electric power and drinking water and the general standard of living would be raised.
2. Many young volunteers enlisted simply out of curiosity or love of adventure; others joined up because the Trudovak insignia gave them the chance of going to school, or getting work in a factory, or elsewhere. A few of the older men who had compromised themselves vis-a-vis the Communists enlisted in order to reinstate themselves with the regime.
3. By 1949, however, much of this early enthusiasm had disappeared. Living conditions in the Trudovaks were bad and parents eventually began to refuse to allow their children to volunteer. At this time, the authorities resorted to more forceful measures to increase recruiting. Special committees were set up in the largest towns in order to force people to volunteer. Similar bodies, with special instructors, were established in the chief towns; sub-committees were set up in districts to ensure close contact with the people. When a recruiting campaign was launched, these committees would descend on the country villages where, aided by local mayors, teachers, Communist Party secretaries, and even priests, they would hold public meetings and make speeches in favor of the Trudovaks, doing their utmost to force the local inhabitants to volunteer.

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4. By 1951, however, these efforts were also meeting with little success. The people were tired and no longer afraid of breaking the law. As a result, the special recruiting campaign in villages was abandoned.
5. In 1951, the Trudovaks were composed partly of conscripted "volunteers", partly of soldiers serving a month only in the Trudovaks, and partly of offenders against the regime who were serving their time in the Trudovaks instead of in prison camps. In the summer of 1951, particularly during harvest time, extra labor was obtained by conscripting men who were supposedly unemployed; most of these recruits came from the towns and were transported in trucks to work on the State Farms. Since they were not used to agricultural work, they were of little value.
6. Trudovaks are not normally paid but are simply given the Trudovak badge which entitles them to be called "Builders of Socialism". During 1951, exceptionally, the State Farms were authorized to pay Trudovaks a wage. However, the farm directors refused to pay them on the grounds that these workers did more harm than good. Every 15 or 20 of them needed three or four other workers to watch them, and it was estimated in the summer of 1951 that they cost five times as much as other workers.
7. In 1951, there were four types of Trudovak Brigades as follows:
 - a. "Holiday" Trudovaks, employed only on holidays, who usually worked on preparing building material for the task at hand (normally state building works, farms, or factories), and cleared and excavated sites so that the skilled workmen would not lose valuable time; children are employed in these brigades for jobs requiring one or two days work;
 - b. "Auxiliary" Trudovaks, employed for work lasting three to seven days, and doing the same type of work as the "Holiday" Trudovaks;
 - c. "Temporary" Trudovaks, who normally work on State Farms or on the construction of factories, alongside the ordinary paid workers;
 - d. "Regular" Trudovaks, composed only of persons over 14 years of age, and consisting mostly of students, some ordinary workers, military conscripts doing Trudovak work instead of Army service, and persons, including even priests, who wish to avoid Communist persecution; these Trudovaks are organized along military lines in squads, platoons, and companies, and are run by trained personnel and are subordinate to an overall commander; the "Regular" Trudovaks work on the more important state building projects such as roads, railways, and power stations; their standard of work, however, is low; (for example, the Pernik-Voluyak (N4247 E2314) railway line, built by the Trudovaks, was still not finished in October 1951, although its completion had been announced three years earlier; a power station at the Rositsa Dam near Sofia collapsed after completion under the pressure of water); such methods of building have resulted in a conflict between the Bulgarian Communist Party and various technical experts employed and [redacted] this conflict will eventually lead to the disbandment of the Trudovaks.

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[redacted] Comment: It is realized that much of this information is dated, but it is hoped that it may be of interest as background information. 50X1-HUM

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